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METAL

ALL METAL HARD ROCK ALL THE TIME



CRIMSON MOONLIGHT
JAYSON SHERLOCK
BLISSED
STEEL PROPHET SAYS
THE METAL BIBLE



Oct/Nov 2006 Issue #65 \$2.95

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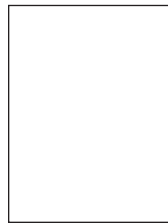
HEAVEN'S METAL

Back to the streets...

Upon interviewing Stryken for its 1986 Heaven's Metal Magazine cover story, the band came upon a proposal for me: "Why don't you let us get the cover printed for you in color, and we'll cover the costs of the cover upgrade, so we can both look better?" This was our first flirtation with color printing. Now, some 20 years later I hit them with the same proposal. "You wanna cover the upgrade cost to do this cover in color?" And the band and label (who are now re-releasing the *First Strike* album on CD) agreed. Just like old times...

A couple other changes to announce: This issue includes a free sampler CD (courtesy Retroactive Records) and this issue has changed its calendar dates strictly for deadline purposes. As you can tell by the issue #, you have not missed any issues in your subscription, nor has the delivery been delayed by more than 3 weeks. So, we're all good, right?

Grace and Peace,



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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



BLISSSED

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS BECK

It's an exciting time for blissed, with the recent release of their new album, *Corrosive*, shooting music videos and touring. We spoke with lead singer David Pearson about these activities, and to discuss what style of music blissed actually plays.

Tell us a little about the new album, *Corrosive*. Now that it's been out for a little while, looking back, did it turn out the way the band expected?

The whole process for making this CD was amazing. It turned out like we had hoped and now we are hearing from all our blissed friends that it turned out as they had hoped, too, and that is what really matters.

You've released a video for the song "Superhero," with a few more videos planned. Are there any memorable experiences from the video shoots that you would like to share?

Yeah, the video for "Superhero" is out there playing now. The shoot was real busy, we had a high def wide screen crew do the whole shoot. We shot for seven days straight, and I mean straight. We have five more videos shot and in editing now. I should tell you that we will be doing more shooting, both another session with the crew and also shooting at concerts, too. We want to have a video for each song and then we will release a great DVD that has all the videos as well as live footage.

There has been some controversy over what style of music blissed is, which may have all started with the review of *Corrosive* in the last issue of *Heaven's Metal*. How would you describe your music to someone who has never heard it?

That is funny to me. Blissed is a rock band, the same way that Disturbed is a rock band and Stryper and on and on. Blissed makes hard music that still has a lot of melody. We have found our sound. We found it about half way through making *Waking Up The Dead* and we have it on *Corrosive*.

What three goals would you like blissed to accomplish over the next year or two?

One, to play more than 100 shows for the tour, and in doing that, go out as an opener for a great headline band. Two, have a whole load of new people discover blissed. Three, to release another CD immediately after the *Corrosive* touring is done.

News bullets

Steve Rowe posted the following on the **Mortification** website: "On a not-so-happy note, please, *please* do not buy Mortification or Lightforce bootlegs. This type of theft is an ugly, heartless practice, especially considering that people are already making money from liquidated Mort albums from the fallen Diamante Music scam. The situation there is so immoral I cannot even begin to tell. It's not the fault of people who benefitted from getting that stock cheaply, but it almost killed me financially. You, our true supporters, need to realize that bootlegging and downloading of our music is KILLING this ministry. We cannot stay financially afloat with this criminal activity still happening in "Christian" music. We all have families to care for and bills to pay. God cannot stand in the way of man's greed, evil practice and immoral choices. Although God still provides for us by His miracle provision, after what my family and I have been through the past 10 years, this problem is becoming increasingly stressful. If you want Mort to survive, please help stop this criminal activity by purchasing official releases."

Rex Carroll and **Scott Wenzel** are writing material for a new **Whitecross** album. (Rex sent me a couple songs he's been working on, and ... boy, are they aggressive! The guitars sound great and metallic as expected on one, and all-out Southern raw almost Black Label Society on the other.)

Jamie Rowe will do a 1 week solo tour in Mexico where **Guardian** is more popular than in the US. Guardian will be at the ARPA awards in Mexico City on 10/14/06. The band also has a tentative date in Europe 2/17/07. This would be the band's first European gig since 1999.

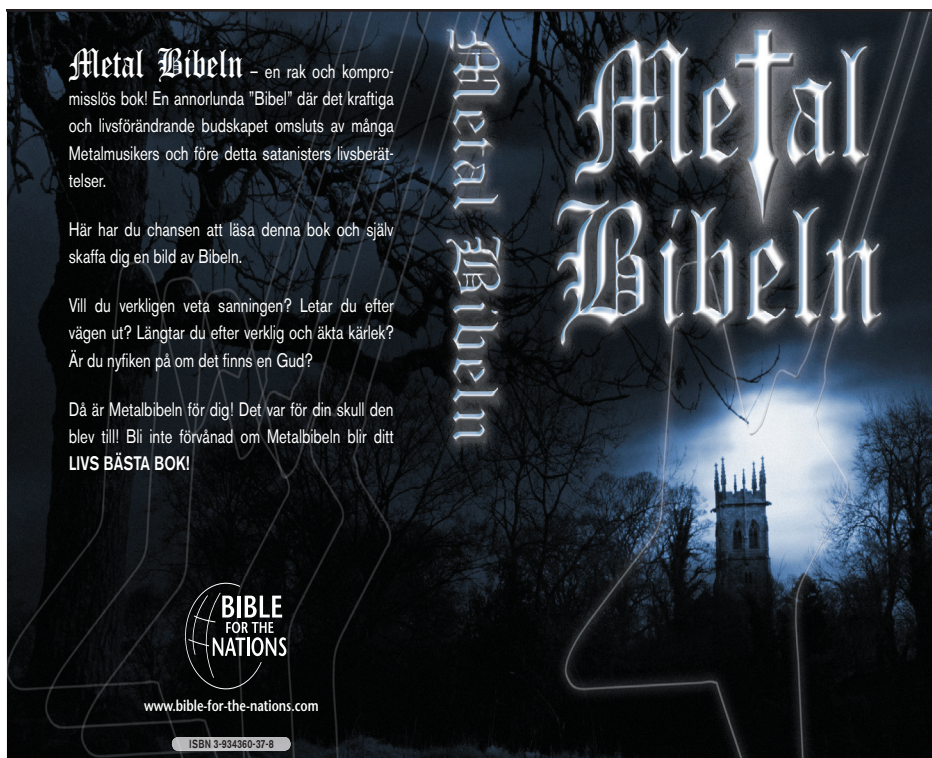
Feast Eternal is revived and is writing for their new album. Picked up by Open Grave/Red State Records, the band has actually been in existence on and off since 1992. In late 2006 the original *Prisons of Flesh* album will be reissued with 2 bonus tracks.

Rivera/Bomma seeks a professional international management company and record label for their 3rd release. For more info: riverabomma@yahoo.com.

Tom Taitano of **Totalisti** is now endorsed by Sonor Drums based in Germany. **Blissed's** *Corrosive* tour is unique, because for a limited time the band is doing private shows, and they call it *Blissed In Your Space*. There is a performance and then a backstage party for you and your friends.

Convicted has signed on with Crimson Forged Records. The band is proud to announce the completion of their first full-length CD, *Master Of the Unspoken*.

Bride highly anticipates the new album they are recording because, according to Dale, in the past the band sought to please record labels and critics, but this time they are "pleasing themselves" with the



The Metal Bible

The *Metal Bible* is a special Bible edition for all us that are into metal music. It contains the New Testament as well as testimonies from metalheads that share their lifestyles and talk about what God and the Bible means to them. Participants included: Nicko McBrain (Iron Maiden), Tommy Aldridge (Whitesnake), Peter Baltes (Accept), Brian Welsh (ex-Korn), Rob Rock, Michael Sweet (Stryper), Ken Tamplin, Metal Pastor Bob Beeman (Sanctuary International), Karl Walfridsson (Pantokrator), Shadows of Paragon, Luke Renno (Crimson Thorn), Simon "Pilgrim" Rosén (Crimson Moonlight), Christian Rivel (Narnia, Divinefire), Matt Smith (Theocracy), Ulf Christiansson (Jerusalem), Michael Hero (Sons of Thunder, Hero), Björn Stigsson (Leviticus), Torbjörn Weinesjö (Veni Domine), Slav Simanic, Richard Lynch (Saint), Steve Rowe (Mortification), Ted Kirkpatrick (Tourniquet), Herbie Langhans & Mike Pflüger (Seventh Avenue), Carl Johan Grimmark (Narnia), Jani Stefanovic (Renascent), Scott Waters (Ultimatum), Batista (Antidemon), John Schlitt (Petra), Miguel Martinez (Exousia), Gabriela Sepúlveda (Boanerges), Rod Rivera & Johnny Bomma (Rivera/Bomma) and more.

The purpose of this special Bible is "to break down prejudices and misconceptions that many metalheads have about the Bible and help people to realize that the Bible is not a boring book, but an interesting and living book that has a lot to tell us today." The first version of the *Metal Bible* is printed in Swedish. They're currently working hard with an English, Portuguese and Spanish version. Planned release dates are: December 2006 for the English version; April 2007 for Portuguese; and November 2007 for Spanish. Later on it will probably be released on other languages as well. To receive updates of how the work with these translations progress, you can email info@metalbibel.nu to be added to the mailing list.

The Metal For Jesus folks took 6,700 copies of the *Metal Bible* to the massive Sweden Rock Festival. This year fans of Deep Purple, Gammaray, Evergrey, Whitesnake, Alice Cooper, Venom, WASP, Queensryche, Def Leppard, Doro, Journey, Cathedral, Sodom, Arch Enemy, Metal Church, Dragonforce, Kamelot, Entombed, Raise Hell, Lord Belial, Celtic Frost and many other metal bands were offered a copy if they came by the booth, where they were also able to sample some Christian metal music. Most popular listening choices turned out to be: Stryper, Whitecross, Saint, Harmony and Crimson Moonlight.

"We had put up signs that said that people could get *Metal Bibles* for free at our tables," explains leader Johannes Jonsson, "and many came and picked up a copy. So we weren't giving the Bibles out just to anyone, but only to those that were interested in it. The most common responses we got were: 'Cool, this one I really *have* to have!', 'Great idea with a metal bible!', 'Can I take a copy for my friend?' and 'I will read this in my tent tonight!'"

To see a trailer about how the Metal Bible looks, surf to metalcommunity.se/bildspel.wmv

new material. According to Dale, "This means we are truly pouring our heart and soul into this labor of love. We feel that out of all of our songs that this CD will best represent who and what Bride is musically." Bride will once again head to Brazil, possibly in October. A US tour is currently on hold since the band is still unable to secure enough dates.

Holy Soldier fans will be delighted to know that for the first time in years, the band has an all new, updated website.

The official **Rob Rock** website robrock.com has posted 19 mp3's from 17 different albums that Rob Rock has recorded over the years as well as many other updates and vocal tips. Also see myspace.com/robrock1. Rob Rock is writing songs for his fourth solo album this month, the follow-up to the much praised *Holy Hell* CD. An early 2007 release is expected.

Nodes Of Ranvier is sad to report that **Terry Taylor** has stepped out of the band. He issued this statement: "Being in Nodes over the last couple years has been one of the most important things I have ever done with my life...Being in a band is either all or nothing. I just did not feel like I could give the 100% that I owe Nodes and the fans...Leaving the band seemed like the best thing for all of us. I will still be involved with the band in other ways. I have the same desire to help Nodes go as far as they can, whether I am in the band or not...For all the Nodes fans, I will miss you more than I can ever put into words. Your involvement in my life has made me a much happier human being. What you have given me will always be in my heart. Please stay in contact. Many of you have become close friends and I do not want to lose that part of my life. Love always, Terry."

Congratulations to **Kalel of Pillar** and his wife who had a baby boy Tuesday, July 18, 2006. They named him **Kyler Scott Wittig** and he was 9.7lbs.

Although **Spoken's** trailer was broken into, the band was thankful that no equipment was in it. The hooligans stole a window out of the band's shuttle, cut wires to the trailer brakes, and made off with the trailer brake controller. They also stole a few other items and some DVDs. The band is hoping for a CSI intervention since the hoodlums left behind the knife they used to cut out the window.

Haste the Day is currently working on their third Solid State release and they plan on hitting the studio immediately following *The Purevolume Silver Bullet Tour*.

Stephen Christian of Anberlin produced his first band, **The Vow**, from Lakeland, FL. Check them out at myspace.com/thevow or thevowonline.com.

He Is Legend has pulled out of the *Warped tour* for several reasons: "Our bus situation fell through and our van and trailer could not be fixed in time to do the tour...Over the last year we have put ourselves in a lot of trying and stressful situations...we feel ...it would be in our best interest to stay off of the road for a little while longer. We would like to apologize to the fans looking forward to seeing our show and we promise that we will make it up to you in the near future." Their van broke down on their way to the recent Purple Door Festival, but they were still able to make it, even switching from the HM Magazine stage to the main-stage for an evening slot.

METAL TRACKS

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ZAO IS METAL

Great idea on the double feature of Zao. A few things from those interviews (okay, Dan did most of the talking) that stuck with me. Dan's comments about the harshness of those that are supposed to be the most loving hit home with me. It is sad how Christians can stand back and watch and judge the most harshly when a brother is in need just because they don't understand or can't relate to what they are going through. As a physician I can relate to the lyrics of "Physician Heal Thyself" plenty well. I try to treat others like I would want to be treated if I were in the same shoes, but in our profession it is amazingly hard to find someone willing to reciprocate. Second, Dan says "I used to go to shows and everyone knew the words and knew all what the bands were about..." My thoughts exactly. My biggest problem with the music scene today is that everyone seems to blend together. What is fascinating is that when everyone in the Christian scene was singing about the same thing...Jesus Christ...each band did have their own easily recognizable identity!!

—Jonathan Swank, via internet

DRUNKEN BIKER ROCK?

I read HM a lot and I need a little advice. I have come to really enjoy Zakk Wylde and his music in BLS, but I am just not crazy about his lyrics and the whole drunken biker image. I love his guitar playing. He really goes for it and really rips and not too many players today play like that. I also like the total reckless, take no prisoners sound his band gets. My question is, do you know of a comparable hard Christian band who sounds similar? With over the top, ripping guitar playing? I like Bride a lot, and I still get into Stryper, but I find myself going to secular bands for the real heavy stuff and you know how that goes – terrible lyrics and bad satanic images. I can say it really doesn't bother me much, I am secure in my faith, I am not worried about being possessed or anything... lol ... I feel a little like I should be trying to find a few Christian counterparts. Thanks.

—Rick Washam, via internet

Ed – The bold and brash guitar tones Wylde and Black Label Society gets are indeed gnarly. The closest I can think would be Maylene & The Sons Of Disaster, The Showdown, and maybe Sweden's Cornerstone.

PARAMAECIUM

Hi Doug. I'm William from P.R. and I'm subscribed to Heaven's Metal Fanzine. In case you haven't noticed, the original members of Paramaecium (the line-up of the first CD) are back and are planning on recording a new album. Why don't you make an article about them for the next issue of Heaven's Metal, maybe put them on the cover. Thanks and God bless you.

—William Pagan Rivera, via internet

Ed – Thanks! Very interesting idea!

ME MUM ANGERS ME

Hello Doug, it's been a long time since I've written you last. I was a sophomore in high school back in 1986. I had a subscription to Heaven's Metal for the first 3 or 4 years and the fanzine was a highlight of those days. I held them sacred for years. Anyway, I'm older now and I long to have those first couple of years. My mother had thrown them out when I went off to the military. Ouch!!! So, I've been searching high and low to replace them to no avail. Do you have any suggestions? Too bad they are not on your back issues list. Please help. I need my Heaven's Metal issues. Thank you!

—James Allan, via internet

Ed – Hmmm. That's a super drag. The only resource I can think of is eBay. If someone ever wanted to invest in the project (hint, hint), wouldn't it be cool to publish a lot of the early issues in a special edition book or something? Until that ever happens, it's a treasure hunt.

FREAKISH ANGER

Hi! My name is Philip Lowry, and I'm a big fan of your magazine. There's a musician I think you should know about, called Angry Little Freak. I really like him, because his music and lyrics are really dark and he sounds like God's answer to Marilyn Manson. You can check him out online at angrylittlefreak.com.

—Philip Lowry, via internet

Ed – Funny story: He sent me his CD and I popped it in and heard story after story of sexual abuse testimonies. It seemed to fit, as his music ministry is directed to a troubled, dark crowd, but this was a mistaken printing of the disc. When I told him about it, he sent me another one, which is reviewed this issue.

[nothin' but] News bullets

Roxx Productions have released a special edition compilation album to promote the *Up From The Ashes II* show, featuring **Saint**, **Once Dead**, **Final Axe**, **Ultimatum**, **Tykkus**, **Neon Cross**, and others.

Recently released: **Stryper** – *Greatest Hits Live In Puerto Rico* (DVD); **Akacia** – *This Fading Time* (buy at Musea & Amazon); **Brighteye Brison** (featuring some Flagship members) – *Stories*; **Bride** – *This Is It* (re-release with 4 bonus tracks); **Drotnnar** – *Welterwelk*; **Stairway** – *The Other Side Of Midnight*; **Daniel Band** – *Run From The Darkness* re-release (with bonus tracks and the "Walk On The Water" video on the enhanced disc); DB's *Straight Ahead* re-release with 2 bonus tracks; **Servant's** *Rockin Revival* and *Shallow Water* re-releases; the *Labour of Love: In Honour of Life Ricky* Parent tribute compilation (featuring **Liberty N Justice**, members of Journey, Bon Jovi, Europe); and the *Ice Scream Finnish Metal Collection* (featuring **Recidivus**, **Megiddon**, **Venia**, and 13 more).

Upcoming releases: **Evanescence** – *The Open Door* 10/3; **Skillet** – *Comatose* 10/3; **Tortured Conscience** – *Every Knee Shall Bow*; **Adiastasia** – *Life War*; **Divinefire** – *Into A New Dimension* (late Nov in US, 9/23 in Japan); **Lo-Ruhamah** – *The Glory of God*, fall 2006; **Demon Hunter** – *Triptych* re-release (CD with 4 bonus tracks, DVD) 10/31; **Kekal** – *The Habit Of Fire*; **Jupiter VI** – *Back From Mars* (9/06); **X-Sinner** – *Loud & Proud* + 2 tracks from *Cracked* (10/06); **Emotion** – *S/T* (10/06); **The Seventh Power** – *S/T* (Robert Sweet on drums) 11/06; **Zion** – *Thrill Seeker: A Live History* (11/06); **The Lead** – *Hardcore For Jesus* 2 CD set 1000 copies only, which includes all their great albums: the self-titled EP, *Return Fire*, *Automoloch*, *The Past Behind*, and *Burn This Record* (11/06); **X-Sinner** – *Back In Red* (2007); **Disciple** – *The Scars Remain* (11/06); **Norma Jean** – *Redeemer* (9/12); **Tourniquet** – *Live at Bobfest* (DVD); **Final Axe** – *The Axe of the Apostles* (which reviewed under the title *Blades of Blood*, referring to it as 2005's "Comeback of the year" album); and the **Coriolis** self-titled album is one quality dark album that shouldn't be forgotten, especially just because of the sudden surprise death of PsychoAcoustix Records founder, Carl Crandell (myspace.com/coriolis).

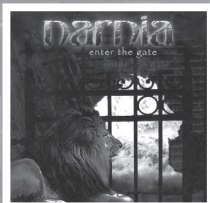
Band lineup changes:

With Faith Or Flames has found a new guitar player – **Mike Milliken**. Mike will join them on the *Battle For Blood* tour.

A Call To Arms just added former **ACTA** singer **TJ Salyers** back to their roster.

Former **1 Method** drummer **Heath Gorman** has rejoined the band full-time. Charis Core Management has picked up the band. *Bleeding Hearts Tour* is scheduled following the release of *Bleed This Heart Of Stone*.

As Bound With Them needs a new drummer. If interested send them a message on their Myspace website.



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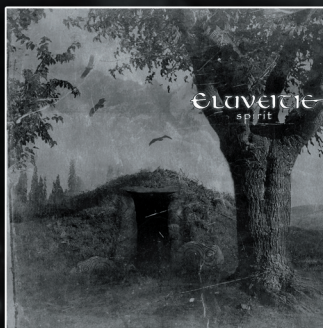
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FD024

Royal Anguish - A Journey Through The Shadows Of Time CD
Brand new album of this USA based death-gothic metal band. Artwork by Samuel Durling



FD023

Eluveitie - Spirit CD
The Swiss celtic pagans are back with their first full-length album. For fans of Cruachan and Skyforger. Produced by Markus Stock (The Vision Bleak) Artwork by Travis Smith (Opeth)



FD022

Royal Anguish
Tales of Sullen Eyes EP
Re-release of the latest EP of this USA based death-gothic metal band. Produced by Erik Rutan (Hate Eternal/Morbid Angel)

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STRYKEN | A RIOT

INTERVIEW BY DOUG VAN PELT



It was back in 1986 and Heaven's Metal Magazine was in its second year of publication. I'd just finished issue #6, the second to feature Stryper on the cover, when I started investigating this metal band that was advertising everywhere (places like Metal Edge and CCM), and I came to find out that they were from Cedar Park, Texas (where our beloved and helpful intern, Rand Renfrow, is from). I drove through narrow gravel roads between sage brush and tumble weeds to a cluster of trailers and a small shed turned rehearsal/recording studio and band/label office. Thus began a grand friendship that's lasted through the decades. Now I find myself sitting in the waiting area at an IHOP Restaurant in Round Rock, Texas for an interview with these aging rockers.

While not exactly retired from music, this meeting with Stryker was more about reliving old days than it was planning new musical ventures. Drummer Joey Knight has kept his chops up throughout the years – but not his drumming skills – rather his "melt the wax off candles" melodic vocals. And Dale Striker is living on in the music world in a vicarious way – through his son, who's playing in the mewwithoutYou clone band, Despite The Loss. Stephen Striker (who apparently stays busy raising his full quiver of children and selling used cars) and Ezekiel Vade (who shifted careers into firefighting) weren't present to partake of the pancakes and eggs this fine morning. If they were, it might've been obvious that an old 80s metal band was gathering for breakfast at a family eatery. Instead we all fit in rather nicely and inconspicuously

into the blue seats and thick enameled tabletops. This is indeed a far cry from the Styken of yesteryear. Like many a metal band both before and after it, this band of warriors decked out in AOG ("Armor of God") converted motocross gear thought flamboyance was an important part of the heavy metal puzzle. Turns out they were right about that.

Full page ads in *Metal Edge Magazine* circa 1986 made a declaration with bold block white letters on a flat black background: "God damned Satan / and He can change your life!" Before they'd "earned their dues" playing a circuit of clubs, they were getting fanmail by the mail bins, with requests for music, merchandise, and sometimes counseling. I remember dropping by one day to hear a member of the band praying with a troubled caller on the phone. Mind you, all the stage persona and rock star posturing was gone on this occasion. This band understood their purpose, influencing souls for Christ one honest and humble conversation at a time.

The band started their own publishing company, AOG Publishing, and Crystal Records, doing it all themselves since the secular labels wouldn't touch a weird bunch of Christians and the religious labels didn't want to gamble with metal. So the band members wore many hats. Performing with stage names instead of their real names, one might find themselves on the phone with a band member posing as a manager or booking agent (with a "character name" and all). While it all might have seemed like a Bakersfield rendition of Hollywood, it was all part of a simple scheme to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and make a go of it on their own. Kind of a silver and black fiberglass version of today's D.I.Y. hardcore and punk acts. "We were encouraged to do that," explains Dale, "because it kind of protects your private life.

"It's not the healthy that need a doctor," Dale quotes the band's old mantra. "That's what we always said: 'Let's take this message to those that haven't heard the message.' It's harder than you think, because if you don't think that you have anything wrong with you, you know, you don't feel bad or feel sick, you don't want a doctor. I felt like (running the ads in mainstream rock magazines) gave us an opportunity to reach into an area where people weren't going at that time."

"It was that entwined with taking what we knew," adds Joey, "learning from the best in our years of growing up and seeing other bands. 'Who did we look up to? Who did we respect? Who made an impact out there?' And so, learning from that, we took on the persona of being larger than life. If you're going to see yourself as small-town small band, that's all you'll ever be. If you're going to create a persona and make it larger than life, then people are going to take notice. People are going to want to inquire about you. People are going to want to purchase something from you. People are going to want to hear. 'What's all the ruckus about? Who are these guys?' To be honest, Steve (Striker) was actually the mastermind in creating the persona of Stryken."

"The shock part was definitely Steve," admits Dale, with a tone that hides any hint of whether there's admiration or sibling jealousy behind the statement.

"It was our way of getting attention from the secular world," fills out Joey. "How were we going to separate ourselves from all the other bands that were already getting out there? By '86 the L.A. scene was exploding with bands. With no record label to back us nor a group of people at a round table trying to come up with ideas on how to get us out there. So, that was our way of making our mark on the scene."

You've got to hand it to these guys, they certainly got the attention. It's funny how a lot of people slagged them off as Stryper wanna-be's due to the

similarities in the name and the convenient "y" letter in the middle. Everyone knows that Stryper was known as Roxx Regime prior to 1984, but not many of these accusers have held a copy of the red Stryker Blitzkrieg cassette in their hand with the 1983 copyright markings that show who had what name first. Even though they never got much public credit for it, this Central Texas based band changed their name from Stryker to Stryken shortly after Stryper blew up, since the yellow and black explosion was first on most people's radar screens. So taking the past-tense style approach to the verb of "striking" made them appear less like the Johnny Come Lately's they were charged as.

A few years later, right around the time that their debut full-length (the recently re-released *First Strike* album), they pushed themselves further into the spotlight with a crazy publicity stunt that involved carrying a large wooden cross to an Austin, Texas Motley Crue concert. With copies of their album in hand, Joey and Stephen went and were quickly surrounded by kids, who gladly took all the albums they had with them. While trying to talk to these kids, the Austin police officers present told them they'd have to go. In a band meeting the next day, the band decided to follow the Crue South to their next tour stop in San Antonio.

"We went to San Antonio – all four of us, full make-up, in our stage clothes, took this cross that we built in the top of the parking garage next to the arena. We each grabbed an armful of albums, and we walked all the way down this parking garage. We noticed two things right away as we descended out of it – a lot of security and a lot of tv cameras. We go to the front and bring the cross up, and a bunch of kids come up and so do the cameras. We started handing out albums and talking to the kids. I think Steve talked to a few of the news crews. Whitesnake (opening act) comes on and all the kids scatter (inside). So, we look at each other. 'Do we go home now? What do we do?' The decision was made to go into the venue (not the hall itself). I don't know how this happened, but we took the huge cross through the doors, which were opened by security and the police officers are not doing anything to us, but they kept asking, 'Excuse me! Where are you going?' It wasn't until we got to the actual entrance to the venue, where we placed the cross up in front of one of the doors that, at that very moment, we were all surrounded and separated. Each one of us had to face an officer in our face: 'Because of city ordinance blah blah blah, you are in violation and need to remove that cross from that door now!'"

"None of us agreed to move it," interjects Dale. Joey elaborates: "First it was Sammy (Ezekiel), who said, 'No,' and they slapped the cuffs on him. One by one they asked us." Dale chuckles as he adds: "I told them, 'Since the other three guys said, 'No,' and I can't move that cross by myself, I'm pretty much a no-guy, too.'"

"We never entered the arena," explains Joey. "We didn't light the cross on fire and engage in a fist-fight with Motley Crue, which was published a few weeks later. We were detained outside for two hours, Vince Neil came out and looks at us. It turns out that the head of security is a born-again Christian and, after talking to him, he said, 'I sympathize with what you're doing and I'm behind you 100%, but I have to do my job as a police officer.' We acknowledged that and said, 'Do what you have to do. If we broke the law, then we have to answer for that. He said, 'Look, if you can promise me that you're not going to go back in there with that cross, I will release you. Otherwise, you will be going downtown.'"

At another time, the band sent letters to W.A.S.P. and Motley Crue, challenging them to a debate on *Phil Donahue*, which never materialized. The band

"Steve was not too pleased with Motley Crue and what they stood for coming into our 'home turf,' as it were..."

later licensed a song to Arrival Records, a division of K-Tel, for the *Heavy Righteous Metal* album (on CD), which featured a remixed version of "Rock On."

The band had an interesting opportunity kind of slip through its hands in the closing months of its existence. Joey explains: "We were offered a deal by one of this label's subsidiaries, called Dominion Records, who were bringing Venom over from the UK for a USA winter tour. They wanted to stick us on that tour and refer to it as the 'Heaven and Hell Tour.' (Now *that* would have been a tour for the ages!)

"A few weeks later we ended up going our separate ways. And that was the end of us four members of Stryken being together. That was the end of Stryken functioning as a band. We do know now that there were some guys that took on the name and impersonated us. These were guys that were close to the band, who ended up stealing original band product to try and validate who they were, and did a lot of damage in our name. I've come across a lot of that damage through the years, misconceptions of who we were. There've been a few fires I've had to put out over the years."

After several entertaining stories like this, Joey and Dale explained how just recently (in the spring of 2006) the band sent Girder Music's Greg Hays and Rex Carroll (of Whitecross fame) into a studio where they cleaned the old *First Strike* master tapes swab by swab for what turned out to be the first time it was ever officially mastered for its first-time release on compact disc. "We found out there was interest out there," explains Joey, "and people were actually paying too much for cheap CDR versions of the vinyl recordings, so we put it out to get these people some quality product and to get this in the

hands of maybe a new generation. 20 years later, kids are going back to the 80s. They're listening to that stuff again and they're actually paying attention to what was done back then, and they're appreciating it now. So, if this album can actually reach someone again, then why not have it back out there again? That's the purpose of this."

And so another noteworthy band from the 80s stands up one more time to answer the popular question, "Where Are They Now?" and transfers the fragile fragments of a master tape onto compact disc to document a wild and world-changing time in the history of modern music – where faith and heavy metal combined to slightly stretch the then-known boundaries of each. Thanks to their efforts, and companies like Girder Records, Rad Rockers, and Retroactive Records, we have another chance to not forget their contributions. To the wait staff at this IHOP Restaurant, these guys are only as significant as the time they take up in this booth (which turned out to be over two hours) and the size of the tip they left; but to a small and aging world of Christian rockers, they were the loud and proud rockers known as Stryken, who took on the entertainment world on their own terms, following their own crazy ideas, all the while pointing the way to an invisible God they all claimed protection by. As their plodding anthem proclaimed, these were young men had a vision, and they were stout enough to chase it. Love 'em or hate 'em, that ain't a bad legacy to leave behind, is it?

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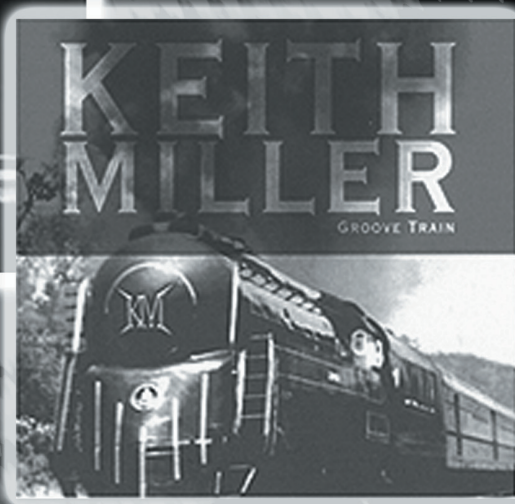
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Jayson Sherlock

INTERVIEW BY ED HELLIG

Only a handful of musicians can stake the claim of having created an entirely new music genre or sub-genre. Jayson Sherlock is one of these musicians. As the progenitor that spawned Horde's Hellig Usvart under the nom-de-guerre 'Anonymous,' Jayson is arguably responsible for ushering Christian black metal into fruition, opening the gates of Heaven for a flood of bands that owe much of their style to the visionary Sherlock. Add to that resumé stints as the drummer for both Mortification and Paramaecium, and his passion for graphic arts, and it begins to make more sense: Jayson has a talent and a vision that is both prolific and eclectic. After many years lurking in the shadows of the music world, in which he rarely – if ever – did any type of press about his career and more specifically Horde, Jayson is finally back and ready to retake his duties at Paramaecium's drummer. I have been trying to track him down for many months via some of his acquaintances and, to my utter surprise, he agreed to this interview. Follow me as he sheds some light into his many projects and his plans for the future.

It's been a while since you did any type of metal or music press. Why now, and what have you been up to?

I guess I've always been involved with one project or another, but yes, the press element has been zero – which is fine, as I'd rather just get on with playing and writing in the shadows! Since leaving Paramaecium, I've worked with Jason DeRon quite regularly. We formed a progressive/metal/fusion band called Soundscape, kind of like an instrumental version of Dream Theater. Hopefully we will record those songs in the future, which should be fun. After that project wrapped up, I played in a melodic/death metal band called Where Shadows Lie, similar to Swedish bands like In Flames or Dark Tranquility. Since then, I've just been practicing and tinkering, nothing much really, so it's great to be back with Paramaecium again. It all feels very natural, we love it! I guess the press is taking notice now because the 'Exhumed...' Paramaecium line-up is together again after ten years.

One of your passions – other than music – is art and design, specifically graphic design. I imagine it is much (more) accessible to make a living in that vocation than in music.

Actually, illustration is more of a passion than graphic design; it's just easier to survive doing graphic design. So yes, it is much easier to make a living doing that than music. Unless you get a break and play with some huge band and tour all the time. Or get into a cover band... some people make a living playing covers.

Elaborating further on that subject, was there ever a time when it was difficult to reconcile your artistic career and your role as drummer – especially with Paramaecium?

I was much harder with Mortification than with Paramaecium. Paramaecium was more part-time than Mortification. With Mort I had to be available to tour and record whenever they needed. So I pretty much had no other job for three or so years while I was in Mort. The commitment with Paramaecium



only required shows on weekends really and no extended touring. I'm pretty sure we just recorded on weekends too, or maybe holidays.

It's been announced recently that the *Exhumed-era Paramaecium* line-up (consisting of Andrew Tompkins - Vocals and Bass, Jason De Ron - Guitars, and yourself on drums) is reuniting to give it another go after a 10-year hiatus. How did the reunion come to fruition, and what can you advance us in terms of future plans for recordings and possibly even touring?

As I said before, Jason and I have always kept in touch and played music together. So, it was great getting in contact with Andrew again after so long. Andrew and Jason had already started the ball rolling, as Jason contributed to the *Echoes from the Ground* album, and was still working with Andrew to make plans for future recordings. They just needed someone who could really commit to the band, and I was in a position to do just that, so I did. Future recordings are definitely in the works, and a few shows here and there, but no major touring as of yet.

Rewinding even further back in time: I recently had the chance to interview Steve Rowe ahead of the release of their new CD, *Erasing the Goblin*. This is a question that I posed to Steve, and would like to ask you as well: you played an important role in the making of *Scrolls of the Megilloth* and your skill as a drummer contributed to elevate that album to its quasi-classic status. Throughout the years, there has been an increasing demand by Mortification fans for a record that matches – or surpasses – the ferocity and brutality of that album. Obviously, you're not in Mortification any longer, but you must have heard those types of comments while

you were still in the band. How do you respond to those demands? What is your opinion of them?

No, I did not hear those comments while I was still in Mort. *Scrolls...* was still pretty fresh back then, so people weren't really expecting a *Scrolls II* in *Post Momentary Affliction*. Anyway, some people consider *Post...* to be the better album. It's been what...14 years since *Scrolls*? So I think over that time some people will want the band to return to that brutal sound. We said what we wanted to say back then, there is not much reason to repeat it. We were three young adrenaline-charged boys then, ready to thrash! I guess the Mort of today is older and wiser. *Erasing the Goblin* is the closest they have been to *Scrolls* in a long time.

Now, on the subject of Horde: For those who have lived under a rock for the past 10 years, you are the artist also known as Anonymous, who was responsible for the recording of that project. One needs not to elaborate on that extraordinary influence that album still has on the metal scene, even today. Tell us how Horde came about. What forces were driving you? What inspired you?

When you think about it, it was pretty obvious. Listen carefully to *Scrolls* and you can hear my Horde vocals all through it. The reason Horde came about was to shine a light in the darkness; it was not to poke fun or to do a parody. I saw a need and I acted, end of story. It's sad that people think it's a joke. It's not. Almost all music has some kind of positive element somewhere, but in black metal I saw none at all. I saw a void, a gaping black hole, full of hatred and death. There was a need for some light. So I recorded *Hellig Usvart*. I wanted to make sure the music was as brutal and grim as the bands in the scene at the time; otherwise it would be ignored. It was awesome for Nuclear Blast to pick

it up. This was just what I wanted for the project, an avenue into the secular scene.

As far as I can remember, you have not spoken in the press about Horde up until now. Was the aura of mystery surrounding the project one that was put in place deliberately? What were the reasons behind the anonymity?

Yes, definitely. I felt the need to be mysterious. There was no reason to openly expose myself as the mind behind the project. I was not the focus, I was not important. The music and the lyrics were of utmost importance. Pointing to the Author and Perfecter of our faith was the focus and in so doing, dethrone the enemy.

Due to the similarity of the name Anonymous with the late Euronymous (of Mayhem/Deathlike Silence fame), and some of the song titles, there have been those who have insinuated that Horde was nothing more than a parody, or at the very least a humorous take on the Norwegian black metal scene. Please clarify once and for all: does that concept hold any truth whatsoever?

Like I said before, there's no truth in it at all. The lyrical subject matter of black metal at the time was grim, sad, a tragedy really. Whether Euronymous existed or not, the name Anonymous was going to be used. It was a coincidence that both names were so similar.

How many copies of *Hellig Usvart* did Nuclear Blast originally press? Were you astonished at how much the out-of-print copies of that album were selling for, even before the advent of auction websites like eBay?

As far as I know, around 4 - 5,000. Yes, I was freaked out. I had no idea of the prices until people told me.

Ten years later...have you ever considered recording a follow-up, or perhaps recruiting other musicians to make Horde a full-on band?

I can't really say too much at this early stage. But I will say that there are no plans to recruit musicians to form a permanent Horde line-up. Horde was always intended to be a project only.

Now that an immediate future with Paramaecium threatens us with another sensorial metal assault, what else is in the works for Jayson Sherlock?

Just Paramaecium at the moment. Paramaecium is the focus and we are playing an Australian music festival called Blackstump in the beginning of September. That's the same festival where Mortification recorded *Live Planetarium* back in 1993. So, we are frantically rehearsing for that, and whatever else may be on offer before year's end.





CRIMSON MOONLIGHT

INTERVIEW BY ED HELLIG

Crimson Moonlight is a force to be reckoned with. In a career that spans close to a decade, the band has honed their talents under the frostbitten moon of Scandinavia in a time where Christian metal – especially Christian black metal – was only beginning to be accepted as a de facto true metal sub-genre. And as the medieval Vikings from yesteryear sought to pillage through new territories, conquering villages with might and valor, the band of warriors comprised of Pilgrim (vocals), Per (guitars), Erik (guitars), Johan (bass), and Gustav (drums) invaded North America this past July for a handful of shows, leaving legions of fans in awe and bringing the Enemy to its heels.

How is the tour going so far?

Pilgrim: I think it's been great! Overwhelming, really. We have done 7 shows so far and met a lot of people. There seems to be a lot of people here today as well and we think the support we got is really awesome and it was more than we could expect. It's great to be in America to play. People seem to like extreme black metal here so it's been great.

How do the metal crowds here in the States compare to the ones in Scandinavia?

P: In some places, I would say they are a little calmer here, especially compared to other places in Europe.

Johan: Especially the Czech Republic, where the audience were a little crazy.

P: And also Switzerland...everyone headbanging the whole time...so here in the States, I had to tell the crowd in some places, "hey, in Sweden we do something called 'headbanging' when we listen to black metal music" (laughs) and then they began doing it.

That's probably because here in the States you're going to see a lot more kids that are into hardcore and metalcore, but you have to understand...they're probably just looking at you in awe...they're kind of just trying to absorb the fact that you guys are playing here...just soaking in the moment, I guess.

J: I'm thinking that too.

How did you like playing Comerstone?

J: It was wonderful...really great. Great people, it was just wonderful.

And how is the camaraderie between the bands in this tour?

P: Great. They're awesome...

...Can you tell us any horror stories? Anything fit to print?

J: I'll tell you what: don't drive next to Becoming the Archetype's van and have your window down, because they'll shoot you with a soft air gun. (laughs)

That's crazy! (laughs) Let's talk about the differences between the two cultures, Swedish and American, since this is your first visit to the US. What is the one thing about American culture that you find specifically interesting? Not just the 'metal culture', but America in general?

P: I would say...this war thing [the Iraq War]...there seem to be a lot more people here that are gung-ho and ready to go to war...and Christians as well...and they think that 'well, it's OK to fight for America' and they love George Bush and everything he does. Back in Sweden, we're like, 'hey, wait...what does Christ say about this war thing?' It's really hard for us to understand those things.

So you think that in Sweden there is a more prevalent anti-war sentiment?

P: We're more neutral. People are more pacific. I think it's harder for us to understand everything about it...I mean, of course, terrorism must be stopped but we must also ask ourselves how we should go about doing it and under what circumstances. Maybe I'm not the right guy for you to be asking that question...

Now, going into a more familiar territory: music...(laughs) The consensus is that *Veil of Remembrance* features a more stripped-down sound when compared to, say, *Eternal Emperor* which had more of a bombastic sound...more of a symphonic black metal vibe. What motivated the band to go down that path? Was this an intentional progression?

P: It was a natural progression. We had several line-up changes in the band and since these guys that are in the band now are all into extreme

death metal and black metal, we wanted *Veil* to feature a more brutal and raw dimension. We think the keyboards...the sound became more extreme as the sound became more guitar-based and that's why we don't have keyboards anymore. I believe that in the long run, these changes will be beneficial for the band.

How is the transition from Rivel Records to Endtime going?

J: I think that Endtime has been great to work with. Endtime is more a 'record label' per se than Rivel. I think so far they have been able to do a lot more for us than Rivel.

P: They put a lot of effort in doing the cover artworks and merchandise. He [Samuel Durling, Endtime's owner] has been doing this for a long time and he really knows how to do these things...I mean, Christian Rivel is an awesome guy...

J: Oh yeah...he's a great guy, and we can't say anything bad about him because he did help us a lot!

P: The transition has been totally amicable, no bad blood at all. Christian has a lot of things to do, with his other bands. So for us and for him this was a good decision to move to Endtime.

The new EP, which is being released for the American tour...what can you tell me about it? How did it come about?

P: We began to write for it about a couple of months before the tour.

J: We started to write "The Advent of the Grim Hour"...and that song took a real long time to finish. We kept changing some of the parts all the time until we got the final version down.

P: The second song, "The Shiver of Fear"...when Erik started in the band he had already been exposed to that song, so we finished when he came aboard. He did some small arrangements. Erik handled the bass in *Veil*, but now he is back on guitar. Johan has been in the band for about a year and a half and so we have this new sound and we all think this is the best music we have ever composed. We feel like we're creating a sound of our own and we want to take the brutality of our sound into a new dimension.

Where was it recorded?

J: The place is called Studio Underground...pretty famous metal studio in Sweden. It was a crazy recording process, because the guy who owns the studio was supposed to go on a vacation three days after we arrived there to record the EP! So we worked day and night to finish it.

As far as lyrical content, are the lyrics following the same concept as *Veil* or does it differ a little?

P: I would say it's kind of the same styling, but we put even more work into the lyrics this time around. We worked a lot for the lyrics in *Veil of Remembrance* and we want to write lyrics about things we have experienced, from our hearts...and yes, we write a lot about the things we struggle with in life...things we've seen...we don't want to be hypocrites about life. Life is hard to live sometimes...I was crushed a couple of years ago when my wife left me...and that's what a lot of *Veil* is about. Still, a lot of struggling... we write about that, but we also make a point about the hope we have in God through all the struggling and we worship Him even more.

The band seems to incorporate the Nordic folklore and tradition onto the band's imagery and the way you do things onstage. I was talking to Matt from Royal Anguish...they just toured Europe for the first time and he had a chance to spend some time with you guys and he said you guys take this stuff pretty seriously. How do you reconcile the Nordic traditions and way of life with your faith?

P: For that, I'd have to tell you a story about the first Vikings, the first

Christian Vikings. When Ansgar and Witmar, the first Christian missionaries arrived in Scandinavia and Sweden, they came in peace to reach the Norsemen, the mighty and frightening Norsemen, with the Gospel of Christ. They really tried to speak their language. This is a cross I wear [points to a Viking cross pendant he wears]. It is a copy of a nineteenth-century Viking cross. Christ is portrayed as a Viking emperor on the cross as he is shown full of victory in His eyes and they call him the Hvítakristr ['White Christ']. So these missionaries spoke the Viking language so the Norsemen could understand Christianity in their way. It was a hard thing to get the message across to the Vikings but a lot of them converted and they began building churches. The first churches were made entirely of wood, and they are called Stave churches. Back in the day there were fifteen hundred of them in Norway and Sweden, mostly Norway. They made them in their own way...they kept the culture with the cultural ornaments, with the dragons and runes and all those things, so it was really fitting the landscape and their style of worshipping God. They really had Christ in their hearts. But then, a couple of hundred years passed... and mind you, I don't want to judge Catholics, but groups of Catholics came to Scandinavia and saw those buildings and said, these are pagan churches...burn them. So they burned a bunch of them. There are 8 left in Norway and only one left in Sweden. So that's the way I see myself. I'm like the first Christian Vikings, because I want to use my culture...I'm proud of being Swedish and I'm proud of my heritage and my Viking history. Of course, I don't like the things that are directly against Christ and the human sacrifices and a lot of that stuff...but the language, the style of the buildings, the architecture...The Bible says that God looks at the heart, not to the outside. It's so sad that so many Christians are like...'hey, come to our church. Come as you are', but then between the lines, it's like...but you should be like we are.'

I totally agree. And since you are Crimson Moonlight, you have the opportunity to make a powerful statement, not only about metal but also about Christianity in general. Have you witnessed some of the ways your music has been able to impact people's lives?

P: On this tour especially...it's been awesome to see a lot of people saying our lyrics have touched them and they're glad that we're writing about these life struggles...and there are a lot of people who tell us how hard it is nowadays to listen to quality Christian music, especially in death and black metal...and yeah, they're willing to listen to secular bands but not the really satanic ones, so they really appreciate the style of music we play. They're really thankful for that. And when people come to us and say they can truly feel the Spirit of God in our music and during our shows...I don't know what else to say, other than that's what this band is all about and I think it's one of the best compliments we can hope for. Of course, it's great when people say we make great music...but when people say they can feel God in our music, for me personally it's awesome.

I can definitely relate to that...and I can tell you that at the Grand Rapids show, my friends and I were all pumped up about seeing you guys, like 'yeah, Crimson Moonlight...black metal...awesome'...which is fine and all. But when you approached me and said: "Can you guys keep us in your prayers?" and were open and honest about what was going on...the whole perspective on the show changed for me. And that's the kind of influence you have on your fans. It's very invaluable. You guys transmit the power of God in a most amazing way.

P: that's what it's all about. Thanks a lot.





What Steel Prophet Says...

Steel Prophet, who formed in 1982, are doing what few bands today can pull off. It's called longevity. Keeping a band going for years and years is a difficult task. Guitarist Steve Kachinsky shared his thoughts on all things musical quite a few years ago in one of our "from the vaults" So & So Says interviews. Enjoy...

DVP: Well, you ready for some strange and interesting questions?

Steve: Uhh, no. (Yeah) I think I can handle it

How are things going with your band Steel Prophet?

I think they are going pretty good. Ya know, that depends on what you mean by, "How are they going?" It's like, ya know, critically the new record is doing good for us and I guess sales are pretty good and all that stuff; so you know, on that end everything is going pretty good.

Well, good! I want to complement you guys on a super clean sound: the guitars and the vocals and drums – everything sounds great.

Thanks man.

You're welcome.

Thanks. I appreciate that, cause I was ... you know, me and the rest of the band – we were pretty concerned on trying to get a real clean sound; so it's good to hear, you know? We feel like we got it.

Yeah, I think you nailed it.

Cool.

So, how is the scene where you're at?

In LA, there really isn't a scene for power metal or any-

thing like that. It's like it doesn't get supported by any kind of media, you know? A band like King Diamond can come into town and play to a decent crowd. Dio is gonna be coming in soon and I sure hope he'll do good. It's like the established acts are doing good, but for the smaller underground acts that don't have the already ongoing fan base, it's not the ideal place to be.

Do you guys have plans to play Europe or Japan or some other market?

Yeah, we went to Europe three times last year and we definitely want to get back there this year.

Good deal.

Yeah, it's like Europe seems to be the only place to really go...

I know...

For a power metal band.

What are some of your favorite songs on the new album?

I'm pretty fond of "Mysteries of Iniquity" and "Earth and Sky." Umm.. "Vengeance Obtained." I am pretty fond of most of the songs, to be honest. You know, most of them are pretty up there in my book. There are a couple that I am not that much into, but out of eleven songs I'd say probably ten of them I am really into.

Cool. Why, uh, why do you think there is so much spiritual conversation or why spiritual topics were covered?

Well, I guess because it seems to be something that interests me and interests Rick, our singer. It's just like when, you know, when once all your basic needs are covered – like, you know: food, shelter, clothing – it's

like it just seems like that's kinda where our minds wandered to next, you know? You know – that kind of thing – philosophy and things of the mind.

Yeah, that's interesting how my mind goes back to that new Dream Theater album. One of the songs says, you know, "Who are we? Why are we here?" and "How did we get here?" And it's asking some of those basic questions that a lot of people don't ask any more.

Yeah, well, that's a shame, man, you know? Your life is so complicated or whatever you don't even have time to, you know, just sit and ponder some things, you know?

Yeah.

Or, you know, that are pretty important and it's kinda like the beginning of the end or something, you know?

What do you think of Jesus Christ?

Well, I myself would say I was raised as a Christian, you know? Baptist ... umm, and, uhhh, I've always been really receptive to the teachings of Jesus and, you know, the New Testament in general. I am pretty much into it, you know? It's like a lot of my life and philosophy is based off of what I learned as a kid and stuff like that, you know?

Cool. What do you think of His claims to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Me?"

Well, I believe that, but I have my own... I don't think that, umm, that I think of it the same way as other people do, you know? It's like, to me that means that you have to accept the ways and message that He has, but I don't necessarily believe that you would have to just say, you know, "I believe in Jesus" and then you would be, like, saved or something like that. I think that, umm, you have to accept the message and the ways and that's what I think He means by that statement.

Mmmmm. Have you ever heard the... I think the writer was CS Lewis. He, uh, said that: "if Jesus said that 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me,' he is either a liar and therefore you can't call him a good teacher; or he's a lunatic who thinks he's God and he's really just messed up in the head; or that he's Lord," and He is Who He says He is because He said it to a room full of Jewish people who knew, you know, (and) took what He said pretty seriously and they wanted to kill him for it...

Right. I don't know, C.S. Lewis sounds like he got it right. I mean, it's gotta be one of the three, you know?

Uh-huh.

It's, like, definitely... For me, it's like I'm, you know, just a man. It's like I can believe what I want to, but I can't say that anything that I believe I can't enforce it on anybody else and say that I know for sure what's going on, you know? I know what I think and what's real to me; but, you know, whatever that is, it could be, you know, everybody else's reality is slightly different than mine, you know?

So, do you think that there are absolutes in this universe or that everything is relative?

I tend to think everything is relative. It's like I am sure there must be absolutes or there's the possibility of them, but, umm... I think mostly, you know, like the relationships between things is what really defines everything. For example, they are trying, you know, to come up with, like, an absolute zero temperature, you know?

Mmhmm.

And it's like, well, it's not really... Maybe it's not really possible, you know? There's something that is pretty close to absolute zero, but to actually have the exact element in ideal form, I don't know. I just know about that kind of thing...

Mmm... Have you ever heard somebody talk about how, uh, if there are no absolute wrongs, then why don't I just take this gun and, uh, if there are some things that are always wrong, then there must be some things that are always right... Have you ever looked at that?

Well, I think there's, like, pretty much, like, things you can define as right and wrong and, ummm, you now call them absolutes and ideals, you know? And then I think that once you define those things you have to actually look at, like, if someone did a ... committed a wrong act, you know, you'd have to kinda look at the whole thing as opposed to just, you know, saying for sure this was completely wrong. I mean, you know, stuff like murder and things like that – they seem like pretty much you could say that's wrong straight-out, but, umm, you know, there are other things that are a

true then, uh, you know, it's not up to me to judge the world or judge anybody who doesn't believe in Christ; but, uh, I've come to the conclusion that what He said is true and therefore there are absolutes in the world and, uh, there is kind of something I can put my feet on, my belief in. I certainly don't try to enforce those views on somebody, like, you know, hold a gun to their head and say, "You've gotta believe this," or "If you believe this, I'll give you money," and try and bribe them, but simply just, you know, try to do what Jesus did and love people and be an example and also tell the message.

Well, that sounds good.

Yeah, I think so.

Yeah.

How do you, uh... Do you ever see a dichotomy between, uh, the spiritual message of a purity of love and the power and brutality of heavy metal?

Yeah, it is an interesting dichotomy there. I don't know. It is hard to define, because like a lot of, umm... Like, to me, it's like God and the power of God must be like an extreme force, you know? and so the power of metal can easily be translated from that force, you know? The brutality? I don't know. I mean, if you look into it, there's a lot of brutal acts committed by God in the Old Testament, you know?

Yeah, there sure is.

So, you know, you can see, like, a parallel in that and a connection there. I don't know.

"...I've always been really receptive to the teachings of Jesus and, you know, the New Testament in general..."

lot harder to define if it's right or wrong, you know?

Mmhmm. Like, maybe someone who's really poor and has to, uh, resort to stealing...

Yeah, and not even stealing; but, I mean, look at some corporations, you know? They have a way of manipulating things so that, you know, basically they could rip people off, right? But it's, like, through different laws and stuff like that – they just kinda manage to find the loophole and, umm... You know, it's complicated. Just like somebody does something that's ... they, like, have three different versions of lies, you know? It's like saying something to trick somebody or omitting information and, you know, stuff like that. And what if it falls in-between those things, like you forgot about it in the moment, so you didn't really omit the information on purpose, but still it seems like it's a lie. You know? It's like there's just a lot of variables to everything in life.

Mmhmm.

So, I don't know. What do you think about all that?

Well, I kinda of think that, uh, most of the major world religions – they all come together and they agree with the basic assumption that you should be nice to each other, but then when you boil them down to what they are really saying, their chief elements – they are diametrically opposed. Like, uh, Christianity or Judaism: you take that and you compare it to Buddhism and one group will say ... or Buddhism will say that there is no personal god; that, uh, god is a force or that there are millions of gods and that you are god and you just must rid yourself of your self through meditation and you can reach this place where you are ... you become one with the universe; whereas Christianity and Judaism teach that there is a God and that there will be a judgment day and we will be judged accordingly; and you can know this God personally and you can be forgiven of sins. I mean, they definitely don't co-exist, uh, as philosophies; because, you know, they just say completely different things. On the surface level; sure, they both say you should be nice to each other, but when you boil it down, they pretty much disagree with each other. So, if there is one correct way and I believe that, you know, I have just come to the conclusion that Jesus is Who He said He was and that He is trustworthy and, uh, if that's

It's definitely interesting.

Yeah, I agree. I think there is a lot of passion in the message of Christ and power metal has a lot of passion in it. It conveys passion in a way that, you know, maybe a country song can't.

Yeah, yeah. It's like there's something about yeah heavy metal. It's like the singers tend to really sound like they're, like, you know, possessed with, like, the Holy Spirit or something, you know, when they're firing on all cylinders and it's just like ... yeah, the power definitely translates really easy, in my opinion.

Mmhmm.

Yeah

Have you uhh what are some of the influential musicians that you know out there what have you thought about some of their lyrics or some of the messages they've melded with their music?

Well, let's see... You know, first guy that comes to mind – that kinda encompasses the whole thing seems to be Ronnie James Dio. I mean, he's just got everything going for him. His lyrics are really powerful. He questions things that people sometimes don't and need to think about. It seems like every note that he sings has power and conviction behind it, and it seems like he focuses on a lot of things that are mysterious, you know? That is one guy that comes to mind.

Yeah, he sure doesn't seem to waste any notes.

No. Um, some other bands... There's some bands I really like: Sacred Warrior and Veni Domine and, I think you know, Solitude Aeternus – they have really cool messages, too. I don't know anything about them – whether they can live up to what they're singing about or not, and so that is kind of cool, you know, 'cause I can just figure that they can keep up with what they are talking about.



ALBUM REVIEWS



X-SINNER

FIRE IT UP

The CD *Peace Treaty* by X-Sinner is hard to find, with used copies often selling for upwards of \$25. For years fans have been clamoring for its re-release, but the band couldn't because it didn't have the rights to the album. So what to do? Re-record parts of the album, change the song order, and replace the ballad "Hold On" with "Fire It Up," a solid rocker that continues the band's AC/DC-ish sound. Unlike *Nineteen Eighty Seven* by Whitecross, where every note was re-recorded, there aren't many noticeable differences here. The vocals are unchanged while a few song intros and outros have been modified, but the biggest change is the addition of several new, beefier guitar solos, which overlay and often sound louder than the original solo. Sometimes it works, while other times the original solo was probably better left alone. This is a great album, to be sure, but if you own the original there may not be enough here to entice you to buy it again. [Retroactive] Chris Beck

ZAO

THE FEAR IS WHAT KEEPS US HERE

With their frequent member changes, and their morphing sound, it is interesting that Zao has maintained the quality that they have. *The Fear is What Keeps Us Here* is a solid release that pushes the limits of metalcore. Some would argue that they have dropped the hardcore elements, but they are there, albeit slightly, to my ear. Full of odd time changes, sudden switches from soft to loud, fast to slow, this album keeps the listener on their toes, and wondering what comes next. [Ferret] Daniel Jesse

HOLY SOLDIER

LIVE, RARE AND RAW (DVD)

Concerts, music videos, interviews, behind the scenes footage ... this truly is a DVD collection for the fans. I'm not sure where they found some of this material, as there is even concert footage from 1985, well before H5 signed their first recording contract. The DVD packaging and menus are professionally done, but don't always expect great video

or audio quality, especially from the material that was transferred from VHS. The highlight of *Live, Rare and Raw* is the footage of H5 as they work with David Zaffiro on the pre-production of their self-titled debut album. Perhaps I've seen too much of the super egos on *Supergroup*, but it was refreshing to see the enthusiasm of the band as they write, rehearse and record each song. A quiet confidence develops as each person begins to realize just how good the album is that they are creating. Though I wish the DVD included more concert footage and interviews from the *Up From the Ashes* festival, three hours of material make this well worth the price. [Roxx] Chris Beck



ULTIMATUM

...TIL THE END!

Few and far between are bands that progress with each release without changing or modernizing their sound. This limited EP contains the best songs I've yet to hear from Ultimatum, who retain their Exodus-influenced thrash metal style. One can't help but move the ol' noggin to these six songs, especially to standout cuts "Deathwish" and "Heart of Metal." Be sure to get this before it's gone. [Roxx] Chris Beck



MICHAEL SWEET

HIM

Him sounds exactly like one would expect a Michael Sweet worship album to sound like – melodious rock music, big choruses and pristine production, all topped off with Michael's unmistakable voice. Michael's take on these worship songs (plus the Christmas song "Oh Holy Night") makes for a fulfilling listen. No, it's not the next Stryper album, but fans of the band or modern worship should definitely pick this up. [Infinity] Chris Beck

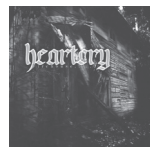


GREEN SLEEVES

GREEN MEDICINE

The history of Green Sleeves dates back to 1979, with the band rearing its head for short

periods of time throughout the decades. During the band's intermissions, lead vocalist Anders Johansson played and recorded with Heartcry (see Heartcry review this issue). Finally, after all of the years of being on-again-off-again, they offer this release of seriously smoking and gritty hard rocking tunes with major crunch. With a heavier sound and feel than the Heartcry releases, this band has a raw and distorted edge reminiscent of a smorgasbord of early 80's European rock/metal bands. I close my eyes and listen in awe as I am taken right back to my younger years with this solid, old school heavy rock/metal disc. Sure to please those who, like me, can enjoy music with heavy raw crunch and blistering soul. Wow! [Vital Music] Jeff McCormack



HEARTCRY

FIREHOUSE

This fourth release by Sweden's Heartcry is a great CD of good, old-fashioned, no frills hard rock 'n' roll. The opening track, "This Time," both musically and vocally, immediately brought to mind the better aspects of another amazing Swedish band, the one and only Jerusalem (I noticed this before even realizing that Dan Tibell of Jerusalem is present on keys). There is the occasional song that leans towards a more 80's pop feel, but the majority are down 'n' dirty old school 70-80's sounding hard rockers. This CD has enough grit, grunt, soul and hooks to enjoy many spins in the deck of the masses of us old school rockers. [Rivel] Jeff McCormack



JUPITER VI

BACK FROM MARS

This new incarnation of Jimmy Brown is a far cry from the *Weapons* era Deliverance, but he's given over to the David Bowie muse. Though not as heavy as *Stay or Learn*, fans of the latter day D will have plenty of heaviness and that booming low voice to appreciate. His covers of The Kinks' "All The Day & All Of The Night" and Daniel Amos' "Through The Speakers" are very fun and "on." I forgot how much I missed this guy's music and voice. [Retroactive] DVP



LAUDAMUS

THE MARK

Laudamus (Rivel Records)

The good news: this release contains their 1992 four-track recordings, now finally available on CD; the bad news: they are the original 1992 recording, so sonically not the greatest by today's standards, though still great sounding old school metal. The good news: there are two great new tracks, a powerful ballad, and a hard rocker; no bad news here. The good news: the entire *Unlimited Love* release has been re-recorded for this disc. The bad news: I find that the original release of these songs had a much heavier punch and feel, and the re-recording, while sonically cleaner, are almost too clean, and have a compressed high end sound, with much of the bass, bottom end and thickness lost. Still a great release, and the additional 6 songs make it worth picking up. [Rivel] Jeff McCormack

JOSH KRAMER OF SAINT

HEADBANGER'S NIGHT 2

Another live CD by Saint? Nope ... well, sort of, but not really! Take the powerhouse vocals of Saint's Josh Kramer, add a band consisting of members from the German powerhouse metal outfits of Ivory Night and Adorned Graves, and what do you get? Euro-Saint! Josh flew over to front these amazing musicians for a handful of great shows rocking out and bringing Saint tunes to the masses overseas. This disc is sure to please most all Saint fans with songs from all releases up to *In the Battle*. I find the overall sound on this CD to be sonically more powerful than the Saint *Live 05* disc was; there is just more volume and heavy bottom end on this recording, making it an enjoyable live experience. Musically, these guys smoke through the tunes, with extra double bass drumming and chunky guitars throughout. One downfall is in duplication – the tracks have a slight gap between them, losing a little of the live feel. Available in the US exclusively through Josh's site at saint777.net [Indie] Jeff McCormack



IONA

LIVE (DVD)

If you've had the privilege of seeing this amazing band live, you know what kind of treat this is. Now imagine one of their rich live shows in 5.1 surround. For the uninitiated, think of Dream Theater without John Petrucci, maybe with a little bagpipe thrown in to nail that "Celtic sound." Or Enya on electric acid. The visuals are all complementary of the band and superbly lit. [Open Sky] Doug Van Pelt



BROKEN VOLUME

S/T

I was prepared for a big let-down before listening to this. After all, it was shredmeister Bruce Swift with his old bandmate Tony Velazquez. I'd heard it was rock in the vein of The Eagles. A far cry from the Queensryche meets Helloween power metal of Sacred Warrior, but a lot more pleasing to the ears than I originally feared. Granted, some of the slower songs dip into maple syrup sap, but the upfront and Jesus-centered lyrics fit well in the more rockin' tunes, like "Fan Into Flame." It's classic rock in the midtempo Midwest realm, like Steely Dan meets Bob Seger meets Head East or early Petra. [Indie] DVP

STAIRWAY

THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT

"Aaaahh-aaaahh!" Yes, the wailing vocals that can hit a note up in the air and come down without skipping a breath...they're all here, as is totally competent shredding. Stairway follow-up their last album (2002's *Hallowed Ground*) with some progression and, if it were possible, an even tighter, more powerful sound. The instrumental "Cantabile" attests to their still sharp skills. [Graeme Leslie] DVP



RENASCENT

THROUGH DARKNESS

Sometimes an album "falls through the cracks" of a magazine and somehow keeps from getting reviewed

(blame a non-responsive publicist if you have to blame someone, or me). This incredibly tight album of monstrous and supersonic speeds is not one to be missed. If you love the majesty of Slechtvalk or Antestor, you must have this. [Metal Union] DVP

CIRCUS DAWN

BETWEEN THE LINES OF GRAY

The fear of being locked up in an insane asylum sometimes feels close when a chaotic band can fuse haunting samples and noise with powerful and frenetic music. Count early Marilyn Manson in that camp, and add Circus Dawn to this motley crew. Blasting drums, tough as nails guitar tones, and howls of screaming hardcore vocals meld together here in utter beauty. [Youngside] DVP



ANGRY LITTLE FREAK

SELF DESTRUCT

Read my reviews and you know I'm a sucker for industrial or gothic inspired metal. While the cover photos are hard to take serious, the aggression bursting through the songs make up for a lot. The vocals at times sound like Layne Staley, and fall slightly flat, but moments like the title track and "Crossfire" nail the sought-after shock rock vibe. A mixed bag of tunes that could use an almost lethal dose of desperation in the vocals. [Purple Box] DVP



STRYKEN

FIRST STRIKE

Do you remember the 80s? I mean *really* remember? If so, do you honestly want to return to that decade? Aside from hair styles and clothing options, some of the music might make you want to forget. There are moments on *First Strike* (available for the first time on CD) where one might question the sanity of that desire, like the electronic drum sounds of "Crush The Head Of Satan" or "Rock On," but there are also some genuine nostalgic moments of NYC glam rock, like "State of Emergency," or the tender Christ-centric ballad, "The Answer." I say, "Go back!" Just be ready to meet Queen, Kiss, Sweet, and the NY Dolls in one band. [Girder] DVP

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THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

When I was 8 years old in 1973 my older brother and I spent hours listening to records. We played them on our father's portable Radiogram, which had a built in radio and record player. On the front was written: "His Master's Voice," which was the company that made it.

My grandmother's brother had a huge, polished wood Radiogram. Even when someone was simply speaking on the radio the sound was big and warm. I imagined how good our Status Quo and Slade Records would sound coming through its giant speakers. It was like the Mercedes Benz of Radiograms made in the late 60's. One of the first in stereo.

After my grandmother died, her brother and his wife became like my surrogate grandmother. We visited alot and I always admired the huge Radiogram that never moved in 23 years. My Aunt passed away and I inherited part of her belongings left behind, including the nice huge Radiogram I have so liked.

In the past 8 years I have dared not play any of my records on it, assuming the needle was well trashed after years of playing 78's. My Aunt had a pile of 78's that I was not interested in – all being old musicals and classical stuff. I have told my wife for years now, "One day I am going to drop a deluxe new turntable in there and play my records fat, warm and old school."

I have a very close friend. His name is Winn. He is 61 years old, twenty years my senior and I doubt that there is anything he cannot make or fix. Last Saturday he and his wife came for dinner and I told him my plans for the Radiogram. He laughed, because I never realized that these Radiograms had 2 needles. 1 for 78's & 16's and one for 33's and 45's. He simply spun a little switch and out came a brand new needle. Within minutes I was rockin' to Quo and the sound is fat and warm.

Our lives are like this. Many of us hear His Master's Voice and say, "Yes I

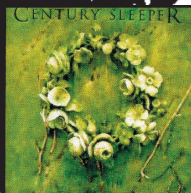


need that in my life." We see the potential of the bigger picture in what we could do for God, but think that our life is too broken or used up to walk into the huge potential God sees in us. If only we could allow The Touch of The Master's Hand. He can turn our lives around to do something big for His Kingdom.

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SOUND ADVICE

By Pastor Bob

My grandfather would be 100 years old this month if he were still alive. He was an itinerant Pastor, which means that he pastored several different churches in several towns at the same time. It wasn't a glamorous job. In rural South Dakota, the winters can be especially challenging. The finances were almost non-existent. My mom tells stories of the family sitting down at an empty dinner table, praying for God to supply. She remembers people simply showing up at their doorstep with extra food for the family. Even though they lived very poorly, they never went hungry. God always supplied.

I think of my grandfather a lot these days. I am proud of his legacy, and for his example to those of us in the family who have followed in his footsteps. But I also wonder what he would think of ministry these days? As I look over my library, I realize I have more Bibles than I need – at least one copy of every translation. Most of them are just sitting on the shelf, since I usually use my computer Bible instead of a hardcopy. I inherited my grandfather's Bible. It is small and well used. When the binding wore out, he personally recovered it with the leather that surrounded my grandmother's high school diploma.

He responded to ministry without really counting the cost. It was probably not a wise decision financially, and was probably not the easiest environment for his family. Being a PK (preacher's kid) was a difficult burden for any young person, especially when their clothes and living conditions were below par for the community. And then, of course, there was the public scrutiny that went along with the position. Nonetheless, he persevered.

When I was nine years old, my younger sister became very ill. They admitted her at the Denver Children's hospital, where specialists tried to find a cure. My grandfather was pastoring a small church just outside of Denver at the time, so our family went to stay with my grandparents to be closer to the hospital. It was a

very difficult time, but it was life changing for me. With my parents at the hospital every day, I had an opportunity to really get to know my grandfather. We talked for hours about his faith, his love for the Bible, and his call to the ministry.

I especially remember one afternoon when he explained to me that Jesus was going to come back again to take us all to Heaven with Him. It was a story I had heard before many times, but this day it really hit home. It wasn't so much the story itself, but the passion in my grandfather's face that made it come alive. With tears in his eyes, he explained our hope of His return, and our great treasure in Heaven living with our loving Heavenly Father for eternity. His talks with me were especially helpful when my sister died a few weeks later. I realized for the first time that death was only temporary, and that eternity was my inheritance. It gave me a curious sense of hope as I mourned my best friend, my sister Barbara.

As I look back on the decades of my own ministry, I am convinced that time with my grandfather taught me more than any time in a classroom or in personal study. It gave me HOPE, which I now realize is the very foundation of my faith and my heart. There is no other message that can get us through good and bad times than our focus on eternity. Many times over the last 42 years since his death, my grandfather's gift of hope to me has taken me past emotional and spiritual crisis and brought that same curious hope that I had when my sister died. I am convinced it is the only message that transcends our daily challenges. I have spent time (as a Christian) in depression, loneliness, and confusion. There have been times when even reading the Bible didn't seem to help. I can recall many times on my knees crying out to the Lord and feeling my prayers were bouncing off the walls. But then I remember my inheritance, my everlasting future, and my hope returns. Happy Birthday, Grandpa. Thank you for your legacy!



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